AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1.   (Currently Amended)   An article management system wherein a noncontact electronic tag storing tag data is attached to an article to be managed in a management area, the system comprising:

a passage radio communication unit disposed in a passage section leading to the management area, the passage radio communication unit capable of communicating with the a noncontact electronic tag attached to the article an object passing through the passage section,; and executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact electronic tag

a reference transmission section for transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact electronic tag,

wherein the reference transmission section transmits information, which specifies a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, to the noncontact electronic tag so that the noncontact electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of the predetermined data.

2.   (Currently Amended)   The article management system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said system is adapted to execute the tag access processing, including[[es]]:

interrogation communication processing of setting [[a]] the part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one piece

portion of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at

the same response timing, and received by the passage radio communication unit,

collides with another portion of response data.

3.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management system as claimed in

claim 2, wherein a limitation condition is set for terminating repetition of the repetitive

processing regardless of whether or not collision avoidance is accomplished.

4.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management system as claimed in

claim 1, wherein the noncontact electronic tag stores inhibition detection-possible data

indicating permission or inhibition of passage through ~~the~~ a passage section, and

wherein the passage radio communication unit executes the tag access processing when

the passage radio communication unit detects the noncontact electronic tag attached to

the ~~article~~ object whose inhibition detection-possible data indicates inhibition of

passage through the passage section.

5.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management system as claimed

claim 1, further comprising:

a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each user and storing user

data, the user radio electronic medium being adapted to communicate[[ing]] with the

passage radio communication unit,

wherein the passage radio communication unit is set to receive the user data

from the user radio electronic medium.

6.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management system as claimed in

claim 1, wherein the noncontact electronic tag contains data that is ~~article~~ object-unique

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data capable of identifying each ~~article~~ <u>object</u>, and includes at least one of unique ID

given for each noncontact electronic tag and ~~article~~ <u>object</u> data.

7. (Currently Amended) The ~~article~~ management system as claimed in

claim [[1]] <u>2</u>, wherein the tag access processing <u>further</u> includes at least one of access

processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to the noncontact electronic tag and

receiving a response signal from the noncontact electronic tag, multiple tag access

processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to a plurality of noncontact electronic

tags and receiving a response signal while reliably circumventing a collision, and

simple tag access processing of transmitting an interrogation signal to a plurality of

noncontact electronic tags and receiving a response signal while circumventing a

collision to some extent.

8. (Currently Amended) A noncontact electronic tag storing inhibition

detection-possible data indicating permission or inhibition of passage through ~~the~~ <u>a</u>

passage section as an application family identifier<u>, wherein said application family

identifier comprises lending processing data and return processing data</u>.

9. (Currently Amended) An ~~article~~ management method ~~using a~~

~~noncontact electronic tag storing tag data which is attached to an article to be managed~~

~~in a management area, the method~~ comprising:

communicating with ~~the~~ <u>a</u> noncontact electronic tag attached to ~~the article~~ <u>an</u>

<u>object</u> passing <u>a radio communication unit</u> ~~through a passage section leading to the~~

~~management area; and~~

~~executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact~~

~~electronic tag~~

transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact electronic tag, and wherein the transmitted information specifies a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, so that the noncontact electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of the predetermined data.

10.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management method as claimed in claim 9, <u>further comprising</u> ~~wherein the~~ tag access processing includ<u>ing</u>[[es]]:

interrogation communication processing of setting [[a]] <u>the</u> part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one ~~piece~~ <u>portion</u> of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at the same response timing and received by the passage radio communication unit collides with another <u>portion of response data</u>.

11.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management method as claimed in claim [[9]] <u>10</u>, wherein the tag access processing is executed for the noncontact electronic tag attached to the ~~article~~ <u>object</u> whose passage is inhibited.

12.   (Currently Amended)   The ~~article~~ management method as claimed <u>in</u> claim 9, further comprising:

communicating with a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each

user and storing user data to receive the user data from the user radio electronic

medium.

13.   (Currently Amended)   A computer-readable medium storing

instructions for operating an article management system wherein a noncontact

electronic tag storing tag data is attached to an article to be managed in a management

area, said instructions comprising[[;]]:

communicating with the a noncontact electronic tag attached to an object the

article passing a radio communication unit through a passage section leading to the

management area; and

executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact

electronic tag

transmitting information, which becomes a reference for determining response

timing of the noncontact electronic tag attached to the object, to the noncontact

electronic tag, and wherein the transmitted information specifies a part of

predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag, so that the noncontact

electronic tag transmits information which becomes a reference specified by the part of

the predetermined data.

14.   (Currently Amended)   The computer-readable medium storing

instructions for operating an article management system as claimed in claim 13, said

instructions further comprising wherein the tag access processing including[[es]]:

interrogation communication processing of setting [[a]] said part of

predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining

a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data

and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

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repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data

and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one ~~piece~~

portion of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at

the same response timing and received by the passage radio communication unit

collides with another portion of response data.

15.   (Currently Amended)   The computer-readable medium storing

instructions for operating ~~an article~~ management system as claimed in claim 14 [[13]],

wherein the tag access processing is executed for the noncontact electronic tag attached

to the ~~article~~ object whose passage is inhibited.

16.   (Currently Amended)   The computer-readable medium storing

instructions for operating ~~an article~~ management system as claimed in claim 13, said

instructions further comprising:

communicating with a user radio electronic medium capable of identifying each

user ~~for user~~ and storing user data to receive the user data from the user radio

electronic medium.

17.   (New) An article management system wherein a noncontact electronic tag

storing tag data is attached to an article to be managed in a management area, the

system comprising:

a passage radio communication unit disposed in a passage section leading to the

management area, the passage radio communication unit communicating with the

noncontact electronic tag attached to the article passing through the passage section,

and executing tag access processing to read the tag data stored in the noncontact

electronic tag;

wherein the tag access processing includes:

interrogation communication processing of setting a part of predetermined data stored in the noncontact electronic tag as reference for determining a response timing for causing the noncontact electronic tag to transmit response data and transmitting specification data specifying the part of the predetermined data; and

repetitive processing of changing a specification position in the specification data and again executing the interrogation communication processing when one piece of response data transmitted from a plurality of noncontact electronic tags at the same response timing, and received by the passage radio communication unit collides with another; and

wherein a limitation condition is set for terminating repetition of the repetitive processing regardless of whether or not collision avoidance is accomplished.